



ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

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MINUTES Board Meeting January 14, 2022

The Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy met on Friday, January 14, 2022 at the Board's office located at 2777 Zelda Road in Montgomery. Members present were Mr. Douglas Cooke (Board Chair), Dr. Karly Downs (Board Vice Chair) and Dr. Mark Westfall (member). Member attending virtually was Dr. Samuel Jones (member) and Board member, Ms. Raven Pyle, was absent. Others attending was Mr. Keith Warren (Executive Director), Ms. Laura Howell (Legal Counsel), Ms. Hope Childers (Board Administrator), and Ms. Renee' Reames (recording secretary) and guests.

The regularly scheduled meeting was advertised on the Board's website, www.mft.alabama.gov, and the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.alabama.gov, in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Mr. Cooke, Board Chair, at 10:07 a.m. Mr. Warren called Board roll and reported that a quorum of the members was present to conduct business. Mr. Cooke welcomed everyone in attendance.

Approval of Minutes: Chairperson Cooke presented the October 22, 2021 Board meeting minutes for the Board's approval. A copy of the minutes was provided to the Board prior to the meeting for their review. Dr. Westfall made a motion to approve the July meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Downs and unanimously approved by the Board.

Report by Board Chair: Mr. Cooke indicated that he had no new business to report at this time.

Executive Director's Report: Mr. Warren presented the Executive Director's Report (copy of the report available for review in Official Book of Minutes) and reviewed the Board's financial activities during FY 2022, for the period ending December 31, 2021. Also presented a line-item summary of expenses for this same period, along with information about the current number of licensees. He indicated that renewal of licenses was underway. He also reported on the number of complaints received to-date.

Mr. Warren reported on the recent audit of the Board's activities and he encouraged the Board members to complete the audit survey. He indicated that there were no new findings. He reminded the Board that the previous findings about jurisdiction to issue associate licenses and collect fees would continue until proposed legislative changes to the Board's statute were approved. He reported that additional information about these changes would be discussed later in the meeting. Dr. Downs made the motion to accept the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Westfall and was unanimously approved by the Board.

Board Administrator's Report: Mr. Warren presented the Administrator's Report listing activities performed by the staff since the last Board meeting held in October (reports available for review in Official Book of Minutes).

Legal Counsel Report: Ms. Howell presented the Legal Counsel Report concerning two complaint cases. She recommended that Case 2022-001 be closed due to no probable cause found in the case. She recommended that Case 2022-002 be closed due to the Board having no jurisdiction in the matter. Dr. Downs made the motion to close Case 2022-001 and Case 2022-002 as recommended by Ms. Howell. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jones and unanimously approved by the Board.

Proposed Legislation: Mr. Warren presented a copy of the proposed legislation. The Board discussed the additional designations for MFT associate and MFT intern in the proposed legislation. He explained that if an individual was still enrolled in a COAMFTE or CACREP school program, obtaining required graduate hours, the individual was not required to apply as an intern. The Board agreed that the individual was exempt for licensure if they were in these programs in an educational institution. The Board discussed the associate license as a prerequisite to LMFT licensure. Dr. Westfall made the motion to approve the proposed legislation with the changes discussed and to pursue presenting the proposed legislation during the 2022 legislative session. The motion was seconded by Dr. Downs and unanimously approved by the Board. The Board continued to discuss developing Rules regarding limitations in scope of practice for associate and intern designations and related advertising practices. Also discussed were proposed sponsors of the legislation.

Proposed Final Rule Change 536-X-8-.09 Technology-Assisted Training Education Requirement of Professional: Mr. Warren presented the Final Rule 536-X-8-.09 for Board approval. He indicated that no public comments were received about the published proposed rule. Dr. Downs made the motion to approve the Final Rule 536-X-8-.09, with a correction to the typographical error. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jones and unanimously approved by the Board.

New Business: Discussion of COAMFTE Accreditation Standards - Dr. Downs presented information about changes in the COAMFTE accreditation standards and the Board discussed comparisons to CACREP accreditation and the Board's licensure requirements. It was the consensus of the Board to defer discussion of the any changes until after the proposed legislation was approved, and the matter would be placed on the next Board meeting agenda.

Requests: The Board reviewed the request from LMFT-RMG to renew license late and waive the late fee. Ms. Howell advised that the Board did not have hardship requests in its statute, and it was the consensus of the Board to deny the request due to no jurisdiction.

The Board reviewed the extension request from LMFTA-LAG, to allow more time to complete required counseling hours. Dr. Downs made the motion to deny the extension and to notify LAG that they had until March 1, 2022 to meet the requirements to renew license. The motion was seconded by Dr. Westfall and unanimously approved by the Board.

The Board reviewed the two requests for clarification concerning the Board's current CE Rule (requests from LMFT-JK and LMFT-EB). The Board discussed action taken at its July 23, 2021 meeting that, between April 1, 2021 to April 30, 2022, there were no restrictions in acquiring CE hours online through eligible CE providers.

Proposed Rule for Applications by Spouses of Active Duty Military Personnel: Mr. Warren presented the proposed Rule 536-X-10-.01 to expedite the licensure process for spouses of active duty military personnel, which included waiving the initial licensing fee. Dr. Westfall made the motion to approve the proposed new Rule 536-X-10-.01 as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Downs and unanimously approved by the Board.

Proposed 2022 Board Meeting Schedule: Chairperson Cooke presented a list of 2022 dates for the Board to conduct business meetings. Dr. Westfall made the motion to approve the following 2022 meeting dates: March 18, June 10 and October 21, 2022. The motion was seconded by Dr. Downs and unanimously approved by the Board.

CE Rule discussion – continued: The Board continued discussions about CE requirements and allowing all online training. The Board discussed modifying the current 20-hour distant-learning rule and enacting an emergency rule to included: 75% online and 25% live participation of the LMT’s 40-hour requirement and a 20-hour requirement for Associates.

Approval of Applications: Dr. Downs reported that she had reviewed the applications for licensure. She presented information on applicant-DM and the interruption in supervisors. The Board agreed that additional documentation was needed and requested a supervisor log (Form 10) signed by the supervisor.

The Board also agreed that additional information was needed on the following applicants:

- applicant-TE documenting 61 direct client hours (Form 10),
- applicant-CEH needed Form 10,
- applicant-JR needed additional supervision hours and was not recommended for approval.

Dr. Westfall made the motion to approve the 4 LMFTs and 2 LMFT-S pending receipt of additional information. The motion was seconded by Dr. Downs and unanimously approved by the Board.

Other Announcements: Chairperson Cooke recognized Ms. Erin Holloway, chairperson of the ALAMFT Network, who provided an update on conversations with Alabama Medicaid about extending their guidelines to LMFT to allow the same authority level as LPC to sign-off and approve Medicaid patient’s treatment plans. She reported that the request had been denied by Medicaid.

Board Orientation: The Board discussed the benefits in providing Board member orientation regarding the licensure process.

CE Rule discussion - continued: The Board continued the discuss of the CE requirements and modifying Rule 536-X-6-.01 Required Relevant Professional and Continuing Education Experience. The Board agreed to defer discussion until the next Board meeting, and again acknowledged that online CE hours were allowed through April 30, 2022.

Adjournment: With no further business to discuss and Mr. Cooke adjourned the meeting at 12:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Cooke
Board Chair

Keith E. Warren
Executive Director
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